ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 101.

THE ECONOMIST
11 April 1981

False and true security

INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 1980s: Counter intelligence

Edited by Roy Godson.
Transaction Books. 340 pages. $7.95.

WHO'S WATCHING YOU?

By Crispin Aubrey.
Penguin. 204 pages. £1.50.

The aftermath of Britain's Hollis affair provides a good time to reconsider the proper purpose of a security service. One or other of these two sharply contrasting books will help any reader to do so. It is hardly possible to agree with both. The first, mainly by Americans, discusses how secret services can best work to preserve democracy; the other, by an Englishman, holds that democracy's future existence is endangered by the secret services' unaccountability.

In April, 1980, the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence—a group of high-powered American dons—held a three-day discussion in Washington, DC on the nature and problems of counter-intelligence. This book, the third in a series, contains the papers then read and summarises the comments made on them. Among the speakers were General Gazit, who had lately retired from a five-year stint as head of Israeli military intelligence, a former commandant of the Defense Intelligence School, a former Director of Naval Intelligence, senior men from the CIA and the FBI, staffs of the congressional intelligence committees and some eminent lawyers. In the past year, the roles of several of those present have become more significant: two for example, Professor Pipes and General Odom, now sit on the National Security Council, and Mr Marsh is secretary of the army. So this was a meeting of practical men, with knowledge and responsibility. It was no ordinary dons' discussion group; and it discussed a subject many liberal dons find repellent. For, if counter-intelligence is to be effective, it must now and then use means of surveillance about which no liberal can feel altogether happy and it has to operate behind veils of secrecy that most liberals abhor.

The problem is not new. In 1844 the British Post Office was caught intercepting letters being sent from abroad to Mazzini, the Italian hero-conspirator, while he lived in London. The aged Duke of Wellington was asked what he thought, and gave this trenchant—and still relevant—reply:

> Such power has always existed from time immemorial in the hands of government, and it is impossible that the affairs of the country can be carried on with security and vigilance without such a privilege: otherwise treasonable designs may be concocted against ourselves or against foreign countries in the very heart of this kingdom, and we may have no clue whatever to detect them.

Nobody at the Washington colloquium was left in any doubt that the Russians are busy planning the downfall of American capitalism, through divers nefarious means, terrorism not excluded, and the object of the three days' meetings was to discuss what countermeasures could be legally and effectively deployed against them. Though the KGB was seen as the main enemy, this book's tone is not exasperatingly anti-Russian; Mr Godson is too scholarly to fail to balance his own judgments.

He prints as an appendix a conjectural directive to the KGB station head in London, prepared by Mr John Bruce Lockhart, formerly of the foreign office. Mr Lockhart includes among the KGB's "key objectives" one, "to undermine respect for authority and all established bourgeois institutions", which fits in with Mr Aubrey's book. Mr Aubrey is a 35-year-old British journalist who wrote for six years for Time Out, and had an awkward brush with the security authorities in 1977. He and a fellow journalist, Mr Duncan Campbell, now of the New Statesman, were arrested on leaving the flat in Muswell Hill of Mr John Berry, a former member of a British signals interception unit in Cyprus. All three were charged under the Official Secrets Act. The case cost the taxpayer about £250,000. In the end, Mr Berry was given a suspended six months' sentence, and the other two got conditional discharges. Mr Aubrey goes through the processes of arrest and trial in detail, and writes critically of telephone tapping and of the mania for secrecy in which some British security officials seem to be wrapped.

He remains shocked at the deportation of Philip Agee, the defector from the CIA—a man at whose name strong men's upper lips can be seen to stiffen, both sides of the Atlantic—and believes that his support for Mr Agee and for his own Time Out colleague Mark Hosenball first made him a marked man. He has, though, one point to make on which *The Economist* echoes him (see "Open secrets", March 15, 1980) and which is touched on in Mr Godson's book. The secret services, indispensable though they are, however admirable they may be, need to be seen to be under much more strict parliamentary control.